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Inspired at an early age: Maureen Rose's extension story

Few Extension retirees can say that their career in Extension started at the age of 9, but Maureen Rose can. She was a 4-H member in Minnesota, where she grew up. 4-H runs in Rose's blood, as her mother was heavily involved in the program herself.

"My mother had a 4-H internship during World War II, since so many people were asked to go fight in the war. The state 4-H leader afterwards asked her if she would be willing to work professionally in a county as a 4-H agent."

Her mother worked in the county for a year until the war ended. Life went on as before.

Rose remained involved with 4-H during her college years and eventually entered her official career after graduating.

"I had a work-study job in the University of Minnesota state 4-H office, which gave me a good start with Extension," Rose said. "After I married, my husband and I moved to Illinois, and I worked for three years there as a youth advisor."

After three years, Rose and her husband moved back to her home state. During this time, she became a mother to three children and took a break from working full time.

"When I was raising small children, I managed a licensed childcare business out of my home for seven years," Rose said. "After we moved to Arkansas, I ran a small mail order business out of my home for a few years."

Unfortunately, her husband was forced to retire in 1988 due to medical complications of MS. She decided to go back to a job out of her home to secure benefits and health coverage for her family.

"I started out working for Waste Management, and I



Maureen enjoys spending time with her family and grandchildren.

eventually moved on to Pulaski County Solid Waste Management District," Rose said. She returned to Waste Management to coordinate the Little Rock recycling program.

It wasn't long until her path brought her back to her roots, and she started working with the Cooperative Extension Service in Arkansas.

"Dr. Mark Peterson, my co-4-H club leader, invited me to work with him in community development, and I accepted," Rose said. "In 2008 the recession heavily affected funding for my position, and I was approached about joining the 4-H youth development staff working on the Operation Military Kids program."

She accepted the position to work with kids who had

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military parents, particularly those whose parents were being deployed.

“It was a very rewarding and very demanding position,” Rose said. “At times I would work seven days a week and 60-80 hours a week since weekend deployment events required my educational programs.”

Long nights and even longer days helped Rose develop a passion for working with military families.

“One job was to support the children while their parents took classes to get ready for deployment,” Rose said. “I was helping the children get prepared to be separated from their parents.”

Summer was filled with camps that she created with a military focus for children.

“There was an urban adventure camp,” Rose said. “We had one in Little Rock and one in Northwest Arkansas. Kids would spend a weekend visiting the highlights of their communities, particularly things that were related to the military.”

During the Northwest Arkansas tour, students visited Crystal Bridges Museum for a look at unique artwork.

“They learned about artwork that was done during wartimes and portrayed military events, and that turned into a real highlight for kids and adults at the camp,” Rose said. “I designed a journal that told the story of each painting and what life was like during that time period. The kids got to see a snapshot of what it was like to be a military kid at that time.”

Rose said that this camp impacted military families in more ways than one.

“It was heartwarming for these parents and their children,” Rose said. “4-H developed a real presence in the eyes of the military folks. They really appreciated what we were doing.”

She retired in 2014, and she and her husband moved to Nebraska. Rose said that it was increasingly important to her to spend time with her husband.

“I felt like I needed to take care of him and our home, so I chose to retire,” Rose said. “I enjoy working in my raised garden beds, since the soil in our yard in Little Rock wasn’t

really conducive to raising vegetables.”

She also loves to spend time with her nearby family since they haven’t always been geographically close.

“We thoroughly love having grandchildren close enough to enjoy,” Rose said. “We are the destination for Christmas, and everyone gathers here for the holidays. We have enough room in the house, and it’s a joy to have everyone around.”

In 2019, Rose and her husband celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary by taking the family on a cruise.

“We took everyone on a seven-day cruise to Alaska,” Rose said. “It was enjoyable to have the whole family together and to get to see a new place. My favorite things about the trip were having the grandchildren pile on the bed to watch a movie, the dinners that we had and simply celebrating our marriage with our loved ones.”

As with most people, 2020 was different for the Rose family. She and her husband have had to be cautious about COVID-19, but they try to remain active in their community.


“We are both active in the church, and I am part of a women’s group there,” Rose said. “I also renewed contact with my college sorority recently.”

The sorority that Rose was a part of in college is over 80 years old and was founded for women who shared a passion for 4-H.

“It was probably the first 4-H sorority ever founded, and it’s still going strong,” Rose said.

Her favorite part about working for Extension was the people who she met along the way, including fellow 4-H volunteers over 20 years.

“I was always proud to be an extension employee and to be able to provide research-based information to the public,” Rose said. “I also loved being able to help develop 4-H programs in three different states. It’s a wonderful program that provided support for me as a child. All three children attribute success to 4-H.”

Rose may not have officially started her career in Extension until she graduated college, but she was inspired at an early age to help make a difference in this world. She did just that. 

Dr. Rick Cartwright inducted into Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame



Dr. Rick Cartwright, retired director of the Cooperative Extension Service, is one of six people who will be inducted into the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame later this year for leadership and service to the state's largest business sector.

The new class of inductees represents agriculture education, the seed industry, agri-business, row-crop production, agricultural and political advocacy, timber management and agricultural research and

outreach, according to the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame.

Other inductees include:

- Joe Don Greenwood of Hermitage, a longtime agriculture educator
- The late Russell Roy Reynolds, longtime director of the Crossett Experimental Forest
- Randy Veach of Manila, a former Arkansas Farm Bureau president
- Mark Waldrip of Moro, founder of Armor Seed Co.
- Andrew Wargo III of Watson, longtime farm manager of Baxter Land Co.

A date for the induction ceremony for Class XXXIV has not been set.

Cartwright, an internationally known rice pathologist, joined the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture in 1992 and served in numerous roles for both extension and the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station. He was appointed extension director in 2017 and retired last year.

"No one is more deserving," extension director Bob Scott said. "When I first started with extension in 2002, Rick was a mentor and when he left extension in 2020, he still was. He was just that kind of friend, co-worker and colleague. I am pleased that he was accepted to the Ag Hall of Fame."

Last year, two longtime extension employees were inducted into the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame: Thomas Vaughns and William E. "Gene" Woodall.

Vaughns worked 20 years as a Crittenden County extension agent and 4-H leader and 14 years as a horticulture specialist at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. He is also a World War II and Korean War Veteran and a member of the Tuskegee Airmen.

Woodall, of Little Rock, worked 26 years as an extension agent in Pulaski, Yell and Monroe counties and later as a cotton specialist at extension's state office in Little Rock. He also created the Cotton Research Verification Trials. 

To our Extension retirees

Happy New Year and happy January! When I was a specialist, January was always an extremely busy month. It was filled with long drives to lots of county meetings, and over the years I put on several pounds of extra finish from all the catfish, BBQ and gumbo lunches. Sometimes I miss that meeting circuit — not for the food (well maybe for the food) but really just to see everyone and get caught up.

We continue to deal with pandemic conditions as we conduct the business of Extension here in the early months of 2021. We are still limiting our in-person meetings to 10 or fewer people and recommending virtual meetings if at all possible. Even as vaccines roll out, the numbers of COVID-related hospitalizations and deaths keep going up. We received some good news. Phase 1B of the state's vaccination plan includes not only people 70 and older but also higher education. Therefore, Extension employees will be eligible to receive vaccinations. I hope all of you are safe and either have or will have access to a vaccine soon. I believe this is the step we need to take to get back to those face-to-face interactions we all so miss.

I must continue to brag about the job that my colleagues are doing right now during the pandemic. We have already begun our virtual county meeting series, which is based on crops. Our corn and rice

meetings received a combined 600-plus views and are still available for those who could not join live. Many other projects are still plowing forward, as we plan for the days when we can resume business under a new normal.

Finally, it has been a month of both joy and sorrow for me. I, along with many in our Extension family, mourn the loss of my friend and co-worker Brent Griffin of Prairie County. I started working with Brent very early on in my career. He, along with Hank Chaney, helped educate me in rice production in the prairie, and I will be forever grateful for knowing Brent. I have to share one story. Hank and Brent wanted me to look at a rice field that had some herbicide injury. At the time, I was getting over my first knee surgery. When we got to the field, it was clear that we needed to go over a levee and out in the field. Long story short, Hank and Brent got under my arms, one on each side, and basically carried me out into a flooded rice field. Is that dedication or something else? And no, we did not fall!

On the joyful side, it was my pleasure to announce that Dr. Rick Cartwright, my predecessor as director and my mentor in how to be



February Birthdays

Charlotte Chitwood - Feb. 2
Booker Clemons - Feb. 2
Bobby Huey - Feb. 2
Brenda Waldrum - Feb. 2
Lamar James - Feb. 3
Bob Reynolds - Feb. 3
Larry Sandage - Feb. 3
Gene Woodall - Feb. 3
Beverly Henderson-Vincent - Feb. 4
Carol Patterson - Feb. 4
Edward Rhodes - Feb. 4
Sheila Brandt - Feb. 5

Mark Phillips - Feb. 5
Fran Tomerlin - Feb. 5
Belinda Miller - Feb. 6
Dora Dinnan - Feb. 7
Beverly Hines - Feb. 7
Wanda House - Feb. 8
Allan Beuerman - Feb. 9
Gertrude Henderson - Feb. 9
Catherine Koch - Feb. 9
Joy Buffalo - Feb. 10
Ella Geisler - Feb. 10
Jimmie Gooch - Feb. 10

Yvonne McCool - Feb. 11
Steve Rodery - Feb. 11
Ann Ward - Feb. 12
Keith Lusby - Feb. 13
Sharon Lillard - Feb. 15
Paula Seago - Feb. 18
Cheryl Williams - Feb. 18
Lynda Lee - Feb. 20
Delores Sowerbrower - Feb. 21
George Davis - Feb. 22
Larry Holeman - Feb. 22
Denise Murdoch - Feb. 22

Gerald Van Brunt - Feb. 23
Rebecca Thomas - Feb. 23
Robert Felsman - Feb. 24
Doyne Potts - Feb. 24
Jeri Vangilder - Feb. 24
Clara Garrett - Feb. 26
Charles Johnston - Feb. 26
James Geisler - Feb. 27
Larry Keaton - Feb. 27
Mary Warren - Feb. 27
Carole Scaramuzza - Feb. 28

Scholarship donations

Gifts have been received from the following people to support professional development opportunities for faculty and staff of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Extension Service Retiree Scholarship Fund

Darlene Millard

In Memory of Earlton Sanders


Charlie Parsons

Portia Short

In honor of Fann Woodward

Mildred and Liz Childs CES Professional Development Fund

Liz Childs

Honorary or memorial donations should be forwarded to the Development Office, ATTN: Brian Helms, Cooperative Extension Service, 2301 South University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72204. If joint recognition is desired, please indicate. To ensure proper notification is sent, please also include in whose honor or memory the gift is made and the mailing address of the person to receive the notification. 


Congratulations, Centenarians!

Dr. C.C. Schaller celebrated his 100th birthday Jan. 15
& Mr. Gene Woodall greets his 100th year on Feb. 3!
Happy Birthday!

Earlton Sanders Passes

Earlton Sanders, age 82, of Huntsville, passed away on Dec. 11, 2020. Earlton worked in the Lonoke and Pulaski County extension offices and was serving as staff chair in Garland County at his retirement. Before coming to extension, Earlton taught school at Dalton and Biggers schools and served as principal in the Newport school district. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Lamar James Passes

Lamar James, age 73, of Jacksonville, passed away on Jan. 10, 2021. Lamar served as a writer in the CES Communications Department for 17 years until he retired in 2009. Before coming to extension, Lamar was a writer and columnist with the Arkansas Gazette. Arrangements were entrusted to A Natural State Funeral Service, Jacksonville. 

Retirees, cont.

a good rice extension specialist, will be inducted on his first nomination to the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame. Rick deserves this honor. My favorite memory of Rick as a friend and mentor when I first started was the time I left a rice leaf with some strange symptoms on Rick's desk late one evening with a note that said "Any idea what this is?" The back story here is that Rick was always out in a field and always leaving a bucket of rice or a handful of leaves on my desk with a note that said, "These symptoms are abiotic in nature. Can you identify?" — meaning he figured the symptoms were from a herbicide, and this was usually followed by a request from the grower or agent to go look at the field. I thought I really beat Rick to it this time. Instead, the next morning, very early, I came to the office to find my leaf stuck in the pages of the Rice Production Handbook. Upon opening the book, there was my leaf — a perfect picture of zinc deficiency — exactly like I had found in the field with a note that read, "You should study this book. It is a good resource." (Insert junior faculty eyeroll at this point.) Anyway, he was being sincere, and it helped.

Looking forward to seeing what 2021 has in store. Stay tuned and be patient just a little longer. I believe there is light at the end of the tunnel. 

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